

RR >70's Texas State AA Champions

Robson Ranch are the 2022 Texas State >70 AA Champions. They earned it. They played six games in two days; beat the >65 AA Champions head-to-head; and, eliminated 3 of 5 >70 AAA teams that they competed against in the elimination rounds.

Here's how they did it.

Ok, I'll admit, they were the only >70 AA team, so they're automatically champs. But they proved to be worthy champs by winning 3 of their 6 games against what must be considered stiffer competition.

Early Wednesday morning, they lost a nail biter, 24-25, to the Texas Rattlers. Carl Caruso pitched a gem, Bob Wheeler (Wheels) opened with a triple and George Wendt, Jimmy Reese and the entire outfield were worked hard but were outstanding. Pat Powers (3/3, 2 Dbls), Ken Ford (3/3, Dbl), Jerry Bennett (2/2) and Mick Calverley (3/3, 3 RBIs) did the work at the plate. At one point, the Rattlers intentionally walked David McKie to load the bases and get to Johnny B. David told the 1st baseman, "You might regret that" and Johnny B gapped one to the fence for an inside the park, grand slam. Even so the Boyz fell one short on the final score.

Game 2 was sweet as Mick C pitched RR to a 22-20 victory over the team that turned out to be the >65 AA Texas State Champs, the Electrifiers from Lubbock, TX. Although not flashy (three of our players

had injured arms and we saw more than a few throws to first base roll there on the ground), Robson's defense was tight, holding the Electrifiers to singles and getting force outs at 2nd base. George Wendt, Carl Caruso and Bob Laderach were perfect at the plate while Terry Scholz went 2 for 3 with a triple, Ken Ford went 2 for 3 with a Dbl and Triple & 3 RBIs and Mick Calverley contributed to his own cause getting 3 more RBIs, while batting 2 for 3.

Game 3 of the first day saw The Robson go against the higher seeded >70 AAA Patriots in the first round of the double elimination. We battled with McKie, Ford, Powers, Ziegler and Laderach all batting 2 for 3, but it wasn't enough with the good guys being sent to the Losers' Bracket after an 11-18 bruising and getting rewarded with a 7 AM showtime the next day for an 8 AM game.

We went home to our hot tubs, bourbons and beers knowing that we could get up early the next day to either make a difference or go home early. Going home early just wouldn't feel worthy of the TX State >70 AA Champs, and it wasn't. WE STEPPED UP.

It was one very determined RR team that faced up with Colorado Scrap Iron, the Colorado >70 AAA Champs. Jerry Bennett was perfect at the plate while Laderach, McKie, Powers and Ziegler were all 3 for 4 with Bobby L and David cracking triples. Coach Gary Smith used his observations of the first day to put together his best line-up and it worked. David ran down a deep fly, taking it over his shoulder at the warning track and Laderach was scooping (often from a laid out, prone position) up hard shots to the left side making put out after put out.

Mick stayed strong and took the victory, 17-8 to ensure The Robson wouldn't be packing their bags just yet.

Next up in the finals of the Losers' (I hate that word) Bracket were our buddies from Austin/Sun City/S.A./ and Georgetown, The Relentless. Carl had the honors pitching and Randy Brewer stepped up bigtime in the clean-up slot batting a perfect, 4 for 4. John Thompson took an injury the first day, so Ken Cline handled 1B digging several throws out of the dirt for outs and hit a double while batting 2 for 3. Clyde Z handled the 'hot corner' at 3B snagging several line shots and Caruso cruised to an easy victory, 23-12. That 2-game run netted 40 runs for RR while our opponents managed only 20.

The sage, yet injured Kelly Petre managed the pinch runners and opponents saw a never-ending stream of speed on the base paths for Robson. Ok, as much speed as you're going to see from 70-year-olds. It's all relative, come on, stay with me. Ziegler & Laderach both batted 3 for 4, as did Ken Cline who snagged a hot shot down the first base line, touched the bag and threw home to beat the runner for a sweet double play. Having already knocked out 3 AAA teams and playing for a shot at the overall championship, Robson scored 5 in the 6th inning to tie it up forcing the Rattlers to eek out one run and a 21-20 victory in the 7th and final inning.

What a tournament! We were so fortunate to have our Brother, Pat Powers join us from Lincoln, NE and he didn't disappoint, leading the team in batting (.722) and rekindling our enthusiasm and spirit. We miss our MVP already, Pat. Thanks for joining us. We hit 13 doubles,

10 triple and 2 home runs for a slugging percentage of .755 (I don't know how you come up with that, but it sounds impressive). Johnny B also hit over .700 and McKie, Laderach, Bennett, Ziegler and Brewer all hit over .600 with Calverley producing beaucoup RBIs.

Special thanks to our coach, Gary Smith, who has more than a little experience at this and showed it by coaxing the very best out of his 16 players. The injured, Dale Hill and Kelly Petre, came along to support the troops, keep book, track the opponents and help coach the bases.

Also, kudos to our General Manager, George Wendt, who puts countless hours into setting up our tournaments and practices to maximize our results, which sometimes are big wins, like this tournament, and other times more about the fellowship (meaning we might not have done so well on the field, but we always have a good time).

We also want to thank our sponsors: Rock Steady Boxing, Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital and GDS Wealth and Financial Services who put up the funds for uniforms and tournaments.

As always, it was a superb team effort and I'm guessing you might be seeing another set of Texas State Championship shirts around the Ranch, soon.

Note: Our RR >65 AA Texans also played in this tournament but were a little short on depth as only 12 players could make the first day of

games. None the less, they played well and went home Texas State Runners-Up and will be beating the bushes for a few more players to plump up their roster.

Johnny B